MARVEL
SECRET INVASION
WAR MACHINE
WEAPON OF S.H.I.E.L.D.
GAGE • CHEN

WHO DO YOU TRUST?

The Skrulls have infected Iron Man with an alien virus that renders his armor and technology useless! Who will rise to defend Earth against the attacking shape-shifters? With Tony Stark down for the count, it's time to say hello to the one-man army: War Machine, weapon of S.H.I.E.L.D.! But can a single hero, even one as well-armed as James Rhodes, stand alone against a worldwide invasion? Witness an exciting new chapter in both Tony and Rhodey's history that paves the way for an all-new War Machine series!

T+

MARVEL

Collecting *Iron Man: Director of S.H.I.E.L.D. #33-35*, written by Christos Gage *(Avengers: The Initiative)* and illustrated by Sean Chen *(Nova)*! Plus: Relive Rhodey's first meetings with Tony Stark and Iron Man, from *Iron Man #144 (1981)*!

MARVEL SECRET INVASION™

WAR MACHINE®

WEAPON OF S.H.I.E.L.D.

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SECRET INVASION™

MARVEL

33

GAGE
CHEN
FLOREA
RAMOS

WAR MACHINE

WEAPON OF S.H.I.E.L.D.

DIRECTOR OF S.H.I.E.L.D.

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THE SAVAGE LAND.

AAAGH!

TONY!

WAR MACHINE
WEAPON OF S.H.I.E.L.D. PART 1

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DON'T TOUCH HIM! THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH HIS--

ALERT. ALIEN VIRUS DETECTED.

STARKTECH FAILURE.

STARKTECH FAILURE.

THE S.H.I.E.L.D. HELICARRIER.

THE RAFT MAXIMUM SECURITY PRISON.

STARKTECH FAILURE.

CAMP HAMMOND TRAINING FACILITY.

STARKTECH FAILURE.

JAMES RHODES, A.K.A. WAR MACHINE. COMMANDER/SENIOR FACULTY.

HANK! WE'VE GOT A TOTAL SYSTEMS CRASH--

HENRY PYM, A.K.A. YELLOWJACKET. COMMANDER/SENIOR FACULTY.

IT'S SOME KIND OF ATTACK. AND NOT JUST HERE.

WAIT. YOUR ARMOR'S STILL WORKING? DIDN'T *TONY* DESIGN IT?

YEAH. I DON'T--

JIM.

THIS MESSAGE WAS ACTIVATED BY A GLOBAL STARKTECH FAILURE. IF YOU'RE SEEING IT, IT PROBABLY MEANS I'M **DEAD.**

MY VOICE IS FED DIRECTLY INTO YOUR EARDRUM. ONLY YOU CAN HEAR ME. TRUST NO ONE, JIM.

WE'RE FACING AN OMEGA LEVEL THREAT. YOU COULD BE EARTH'S ONLY HOPE. WHATEVER YOU'RE DOING, NO MATTER HOW IMPORTANT, YOU HAVE TO DROP IT--

--AND FOLLOW THIS BEACON. DON'T TELL ANYONE, JUST DO IT. YOU'LL KNOW WHEN YOU GET THERE.

BEACON DETECTED. COURSE LOCKED.

SORRY TO BURDEN YOU WITH THIS, JIM, BUT YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE I TRUST. GODSPEED. AND RHODEY...

...AVENGE ME.

IS THAT TONY? IS HE ALL RIGHT?

DAMN IT, RHODEY, TELL ME WHAT HE SAID!

I HAVE TO GO.

YOU'VE GOT SIXTY SUPERHUMANS UNDER YOUR COMMAND. YOU'LL BE FINE.

WAIT! WHERE ARE YOU--?

THAT'S "NEED-TO-KNOW", SORRY.

WHAT?! WE'RE DEPLOYING!

WE NEED YOU!

RHODEY!

JIM!!

WAR MACHINE SHOULD HAVE BEEN INCAPACITATED. ALERT INTELLIGENCE.

GIVE THEM INTERCEPT COORDINATES.

[illegible]

AS YOU COMMAND.

When billionaire industrialist Tony Stark dons sophisticated steel-mesh armor of his own design, he becomes a living high-tech weapon – the world's greatest human fighting machine.

THE INVINCIBLE IRON MAN

James "Rhodey" Rhodes has been many things—a Marine, a pilot, and Tony Stark's best friend. When alcoholism made it impossible for Tony to carry on as Iron Man, Rhodey donned the armor himself. After Tony's recovery, he built Rhodey his own suit—one with the power of an entire army in the hands of one man!

WAR MACHINE

SECRET INVASION

For months, the shape-shifting aliens known as the Skrulls have replaced key figures in the human and superhuman communities. After sowing the seeds of fear and paranoia, the Skrulls are ready to strike and claim Earth for themselves. They lure the Avengers to the prehistoric Savage Land…and strike Iron Man with an alien virus that disables not only his armor, but every piece of technology designed by Stark throughout the world!

Meanwhile, Rhodey has been training the super heroes of tomorrow along with Hank Pym, a.k.a. Yellowjacket (who has secretly been replaced by a Skrull), at The Initiative's Camp Hammond in Stamford, Connecticut. Rhodey is about to find out that Tony plans for every eventuality…and that every war needs a War Machine.

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DAMN IT, TONY. THOSE ARE MY **STUDENTS** I JUST TURNED MY BACK ON. MY **FRIENDS.**

YOU'D BETTER HAVE ONE HELL OF A GOOD--

--REASON...

OKAY. NOW I GET IT.

WE'RE AT WAR.

AND I'M A

WAR MACHINE.

CHOOM

FWOOSH

SHREEE

BRAKAKOOOM

NAILED IT GOOD. SHIELDS COULDN'T HANDLE ALL THAT FIREPOWER AT ONCE.

BUT I'M STARTING TO THINK THE SHIP WAS JUST A DELIVERY SYSTEM... FOR HIM.

GRRR HEE!

A SKRULL. I CAN TAKE A PLATOON OF THESE SUCKERS IN MY SLEEP. WHAT MAKES THIS ONE SO SPECIAL--?

GUHH--!

BLKOOOM

OKAY, BIG MAN. LET'S SEE HOW WELL YOU BREATHE IN SPACE.

HNH!

PRETTY... WELL.

THRUNCH

COME ON, COMPUTER, GIVE ME SOME IDEA WHAT I'M FIGHTING...

ENERGY SIGNATURE ANALYSIS: SKRULL EMPEROR DOOMDRAGON CORRECT MAN

LOOKS LIKE THE SKRULLS HAVE UPGRADED.

THAT'S OKAY. SO HAVE I.

GUESS HE FIGURED OUT MY ARMOR SHIELDS ME FROM MENTAL ATTACKS.

DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT COMET MAN. MAYBE I COULD HANDLE THOSE BLASTS...

...BUT I'D RATHER NOT FIND OUT.

WARNING. SHIELDS AT 24%.

GOD, HIS STRENGTH--!

ONCE MY SHIELDS GO, HE'LL CRACK ME OPEN LIKE A LOBSTER.

CAN'T... BREAK FREE...

SHIELDS AT 13%.

I COULD SELF-DESTRUCT...AT LEAST TAKE HIM WITH ME. I SHOULD'VE DIED A DOZEN TIMES OVER...HELL, PART OF ME DID WHEN--

SHIELDS AT 8%.

NO! ENOUGH OF THAT, MARINE. YOU'VE GOT A JOB TO DO. I DIDN'T HEAR ANYONE GIVE YOU PERMISSION TO DIE.

I'VE SPENT HALF MY LIFE IN HIGH-SPEED AERIAL COMBAT. NO WAY SOME SPACE LIZARD WITH A BUNCH OF CUT-AND-PASTE POWERS OUTMANEUVERS ME.

SHIELDS AT 3%.

GET IN THEIR HEADS. THE SKRULLS MAY BE ALIENS, BUT THEY'RE STILL *WARRIORS.*

BETWEEN THE SERVICE, THE AVENGERS, AND THE INITIATIVE, I KNOW A THING OR TWO ABOUT TACTICS.

SHIELDS DOWN.

A MILITARY FORCE RELIES ON ITS SHOCK TROOPS...

...BUT SUPPORT...

...IS NEVER FAR BEHIND.

FULL POWER REVERSE.

RECOGNIZE.

BOARDING.com

BIG TALK, RHODES. I FEEL LIKE TEN MILES OF BAD ROAD.

IF ANY MORE OF THOSE THINGS COME AFTER ME BEFORE I REPAIR AND RECHARGE, IT'S GONNA GET UGLY.

SMART MONEY SAYS TURN AROUND, HEAD BACK TO CAMP. BUT MY DRILL INSTRUCTOR ALWAYS SAID I WAS MORE STUBBORN THAN SMART.

DESTINATION REACHED.

OKAY.

THIS IS NOT SOMETHING TONY CAME UP WITH ON THE FLY.

PRIORITIZE. GOTTA PLUG IN ASAP OR--

JIM? JIM RHODES?

SUZI ENDO? WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

THE SAME AS YOU, I'D IMAGINE. I GOT A MESSAGE FROM TONY IMPLYING THE WORLD WAS COMING TO AN END, AND ASKING ME TO BOARD A SHUTTLE I DIDN'T KNOW EXISTED.

HE CALLED IN FORCE WORKS? GOOD. WE CAN USE THE TEAM TO--

NO, I THINK YOU AND I ARE THE ONLY ONES. ME FOR MY EXPERTISE IN CYBERNETICS, AND YOU BECAUSE--WELL, BECAUSE YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE HE TRUSTS.

THERE'S A MESSAGE FOR YOU. I CAN'T ACCESS IT. HERE, I'LL SHOW YOU.

AS LONG AS THERE'S SOMEWHERE I CAN RECHARGE. IT'S GETTING HARD TO BREATHE.

YOU CAN PLUG IN RIGHT--

--MY GOD!

RHODEY, WHAT--WHAT *HAPPENED* TO YOU?

COST OF WAR.

RHODEY, I--I'M SORRY--

NOT IMPORTANT NOW. LET'S SEE IF WE CAN GET SOME INTEL.

SYSTEMS CHECK. IDENTITY CONFIRMED: RHODES, JAMES.

BEGIN PLAYBACK.

JIM. THANK YOU FOR COMING. THANK YOU FOR TRUSTING ME...AND FOR BEING ONE OF THE VERY FEW I CAN TRUST.

I HAD THIS SATELLITE CONSTRUCTED WHEN I BECAME DIRECTOR OF S.H.I.E.L.D. NO ONE KNOWS ABOUT IT. IT'S CLOAKED. COMPLETELY OFF THE BOOKS.

IT'S MY JOB TO PLAN FOR ALL POSSIBILITIES. AND IF YOU'RE HEARING THIS, ONE OF THE WORST HAS COME TO PASS.

MY STARKTECH IS BEING INTEGRATED INTO THE ENTIRE INTELLIGENCE, MILITARY AND LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMUNITIES. THAT'S A GOOD THING...

...UNLESS SOMEONE FIGURES OUT HOW TO COMPROMISE IT. THAT SHOULDN'T BE POSSIBLE. BUT IF IT HAPPENS, OUR ABILITY TO RESPOND TO THREATS IS CRIPPLED.

I NEED SOMEONE TO STRIKE BACK IF I CAN'T. SOMEONE CAPABLE. STRONG. EXPERIENCED. I NEED YOU, JIM.

AFTER YOUR...ACCIDENT, I DIDN'T USE STARKTECH IN YOUR NEW ARMOR. IT'S A COMBINATION OF BLEEDING EDGE CYBERWARE...

...AND DISCONTINUED EQUIPMENT FROM WHEN **OBADIAH STANE** RAN MY COMPANY. THE SAME IS TRUE FOR THIS SATELLITE.

YOU'RE COMPLETELY INDEPENDENT FROM ALL OUTSIDE SYSTEMS. YOU CAN INTERACT WITH THE GRID, BUT YOU'RE INSULATED FROM IT.

I'M ASKING YOU TO CARRY ON THE FIGHT, RHODEY. IRON MAN'S GONE. WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS NOW IS A **WAR MACHINE.**

ONE LAST THING. RECENTLY I'VE BECOME AWARE OF...A POSSIBLE THREAT. I'M TAKING STEPS TO DEAL WITH IT, BUT THERE'S A CHANCE IT'S THE REASON YOU'RE SEEING THIS.

IF YOU CAN ACCESS THIS MESSAGE, I KNOW YOU'RE REALLY JIM RHODES. BUT THAT'S ALL I KNOW. I SAY AGAIN, RHODEY--DON'T TRUST ANYONE.

ANYONE.

HE'S TALKING ABOUT SKRULLS. ALIEN SHAPE-CHANGERS.

YOU'RE TALKING AS IF YOU THINK I--

SOMEHOW THEY KNEW I WAS OUT THERE. I ALMOST DIDN'T MAKE IT.

LAST I HEARD, SUZI ENDO WAS ARRESTED FOR OPERATING AS **CYBERMANCER** WITHOUT PROPER SUPERHUMAN REGISTRATION. SEEMS ODD TONY WOULD TRUST YOU...OR VICE VERSA.

THAT WAS A ***MISUNDERSTANDING!*** I DIDN'T THINK THE REGISTRATION ACT APPLIED TO ME--I'M A CITIZEN OF ***HONG KONG.***

I WAS JUST TRYING TO PICK UP THE SLACK WHILE ***YOUR*** COUNTRY'S HEROES WERE BUSY FIGHTING EACH OTHER LIKE ***CHILDREN!***

TONY APOLOGIZED TO ME. DISMISSED THE AGENTS WHO'D ATTACKED ME. I'VE BEEN HEADING UP R&D FOR HIS COMPANY'S ASIAN BRANCH FOR MONTHS!

THE SKRULLS KNEW EXACTLY WHERE TO FIND ME.

MAYBE THEY PICKED YOU UP ON THEIR RADAR.

MY ARMOR'S RADAR-SHIELDED.

FROM ***ALIEN*** TECH? NOW, UNLESS YOU WANT A DEMONSTRATION OF MY "IMPROPERLY REGISTERED" POWERS, I SUGGEST YOU ***BACK OFF***, OR--

AH--RHODEY, I'VE JUST THOUGHT OF A VERY GOOD REASON WHY YOU SHOULD TRUST ME.

I'M LISTENING.

THAT.

BUT TONY SAID WE'RE CLOAKED!

THEY MUST HAVE FOLLOWED MY ENERGY TRAIL.

I'LL KEEP THEM BUSY. GIVE YOU TIME TO MOVE THE SATELLITE.

RHODEY, WAIT! IN YOUR CONDITION, YOU WON'T LAST A MINUTE!

YOU FIGHT WITH THE WEAPONS YOU'VE GOT.

YOU'VE GOT **BETTER**... IF YOU'D GIVE ME TWO SECONDS TO **TELL** YOU ABOUT IT.

I'VE BEEN UP HERE LONGER THAN YOU. I HAD TIME TO LOOK AROUND. AND THIS PLACE HAS FEATURES THAT CAN HELP US.

BUT ONLY YOU CAN ACCESS THEM. SO YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO *TRUST ME.*

SHOW ME.

YOUR ARMOR HOOKS DIRECTLY INTO THE SATELLITE. IN EFFECT, IT'LL BE AN EXTENSION OF YOU. A *PART* OF YOU.

BUT YOU'LL BE UNAWARE OF YOUR BODY'S IMMEDIATE SURROUNDINGS.

FINE. IF YOU'RE A SKRULL, I'M DEAD EITHER WAY.

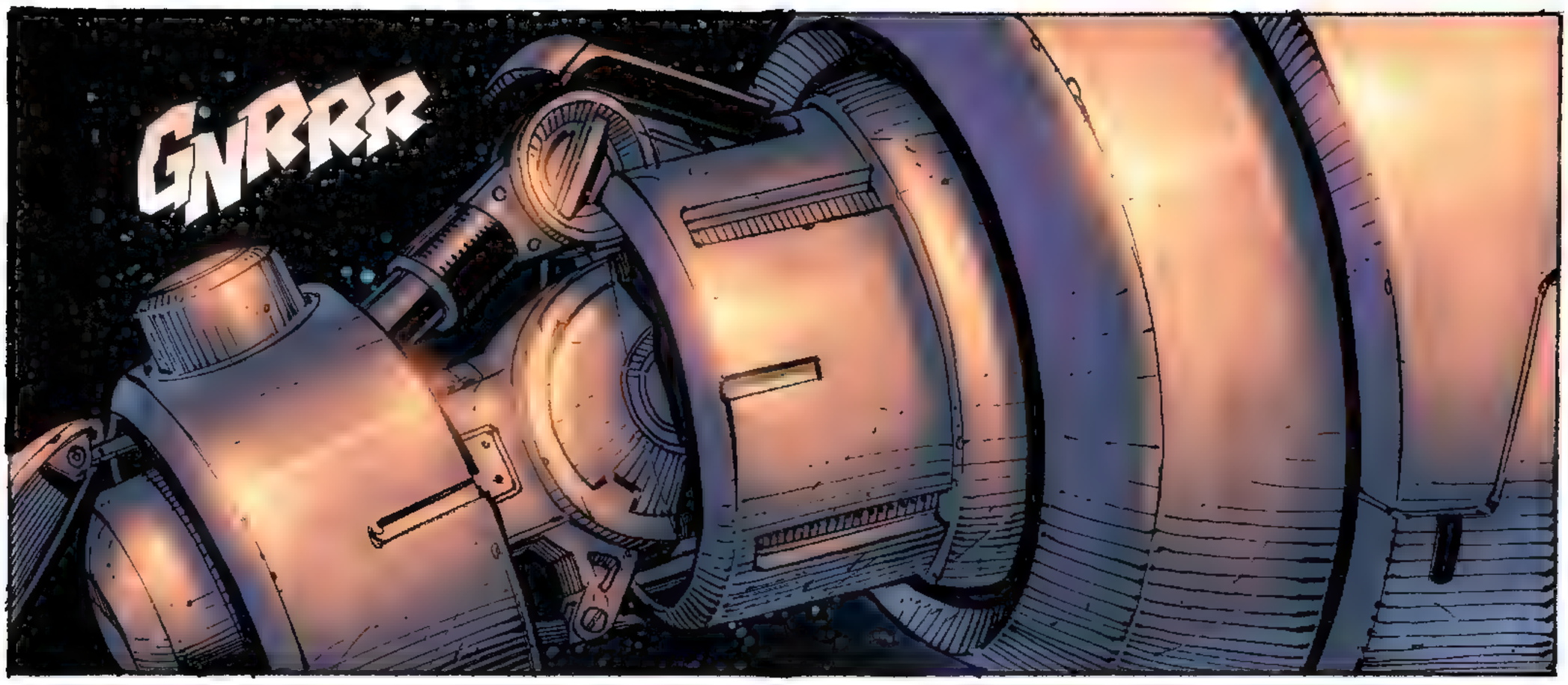
THANKS FOR THE VOTE OF CONFIDENCE. THERE--IT'S DONE.

WARNING. ENEMY WITHIN WEAPONS RANGE.

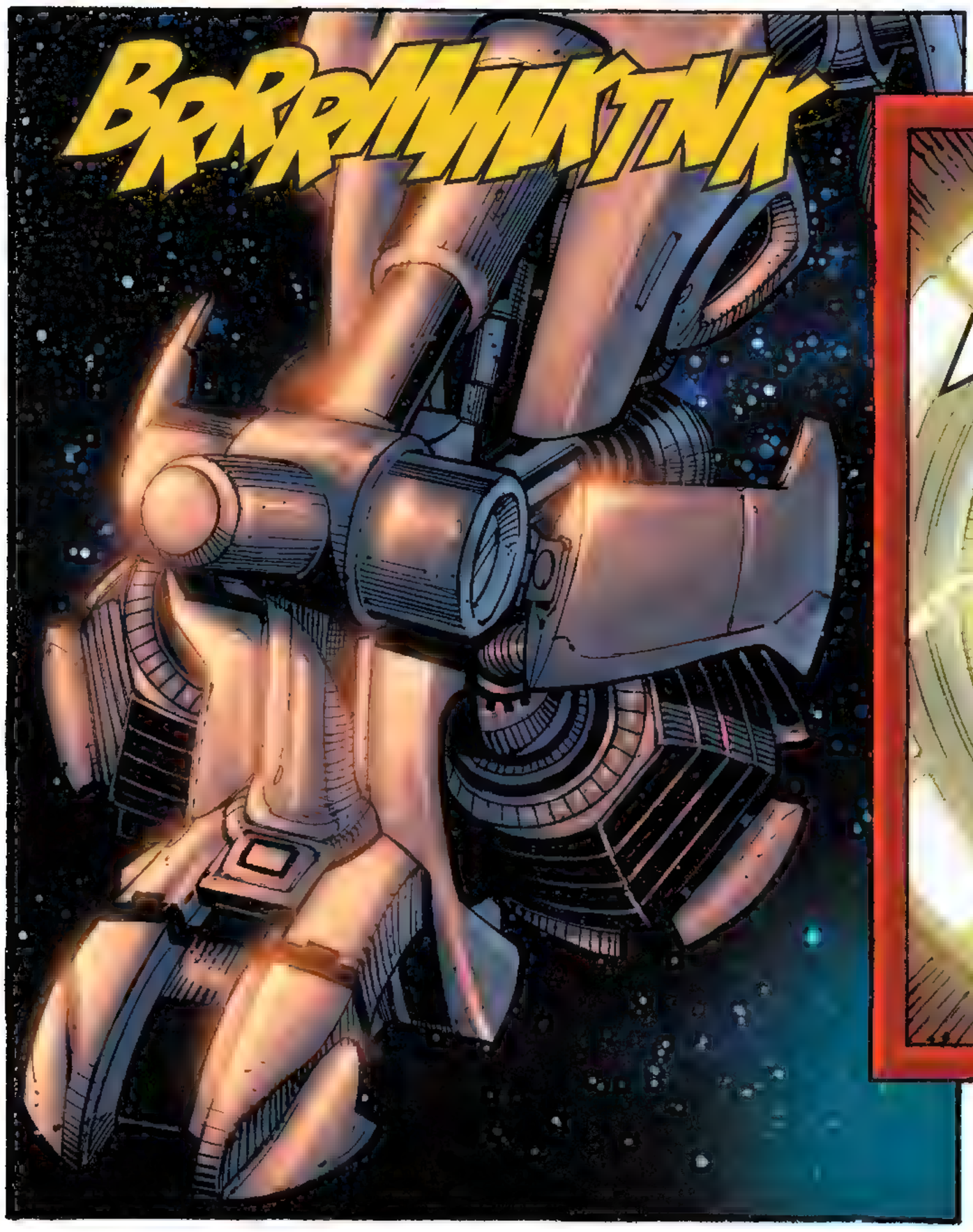
LOCK AND LOAD.

CAPTAIN! WE'RE RECEIVING A TRANSMISSION FROM THE SATELLITE.

WHAT DO THEY SAY?


GNRRR

CH-CHAK


BRRRMMKTNK

SHZZZ

"THEY SAY...

"BRING IT."

NEXT: IT'S BROUGHT!

SECRET INVASION™

MARVEL

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GAGE
CHEN
FLOREA
RAMOS

WAR MACHINE®

WEAPON OF S.H.I.E.L.D.

DIRECTOR OF S.H.I.E.L.D.

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When billionaire industrialist Tony Stark dons sophisticated steel-mesh armor of his own design, he becomes a living high-tech weapon – the world's greatest human fighting machine!

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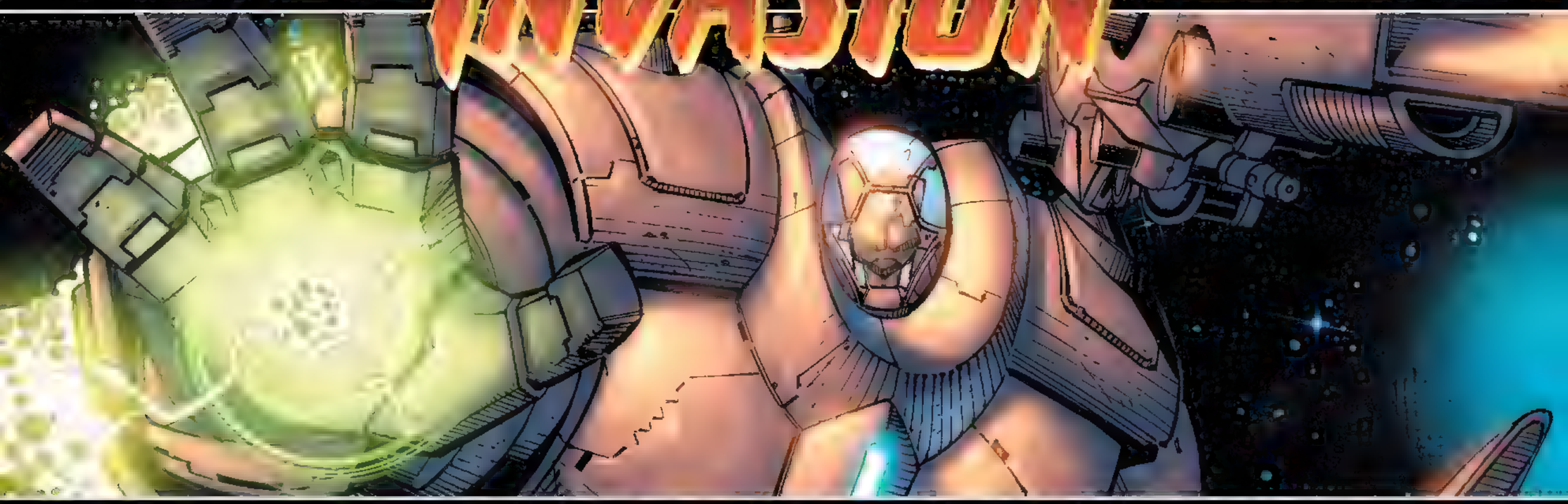

For months, the shape-shifting aliens known as the Skrulls have replaced key figures in the human and superhuman communities. After sowing the seeds of fear and paranoia, the Skrulls are ready to claim Earth for themselves. They lure the Avengers to the prehistoric Savage Land…and strike Iron Man with an alien virus that disables not only his armor, but every piece of technology designed by Stark throughout the world!

Meanwhile, War Machine – who has been training the super heroes of tomorrow at the Initiative's Camp Hammond in Stamford, Connecticut – receives a coded message from Tony with directions to a secret satellite still in operation. There, Rhodey finds former Force Works member Suzi Endo, a.k.a. Cybermancer, who was also contacted by Tony. The duo is then attacked by a Skrull fleet…and Suzi shows Rhodey how to transform the entire satellite into a giant War Machine!

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"For what they've done, they will have to pay the ultimate price."– Ultimatum, November 2008

EARTH ORBIT

CHOOM

VOOOSHH

SHREEEE

WAR MACHINE
WEAPON OF S.H.I.E.L.D. PART 2

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SYSTEMS CHECK! SUZI, THE SHIELDS--

HOLDING FOR NOW! BUT JIM, WE HAVE A PROBLEM!

"THE SKRULLS ARE DIVERTING ALL POWER TO *THEIR* SHIELDS WHILE THEY MOVE INTO FORMATION. I THINK THEY'RE PLANNING TO HIT US ALL AT ONCE."

"WE CAN'T HANDLE THAT MUCH FIRE, RHODEY. NOT EVEN WITH THIS ENTIRE SATELLITE AUGMENTING YOUR ARMOR. THEY'LL BLOW US TO PIECES!"

SURE...IF I SIT HERE AND LET THEM.

BUT THAT--

PTHOOM

--IS NOT GONNA HAPPEN.

GNAHHH!

SCREECH

GRAYS FERRY, PHILADELPHIA. YEARS AGO.

AAHHH!

AWW, DOES THAT HURT? GOOD. YOU EVER CROSS THE PARK AGAIN AND YOU'LL GET IT TEN TIMES WORSE!

YOU WANNA STAY HEALTHY, "BROTHER," YOU BETTER KEEP TO YOUR OWN!

YEARS LATER.

THINK YOU'RE TOO GOOD FOR US, HUH, RHODES? DON'T NEED A SET, DON'T NEED FRIENDS? A'IGHT, THAT'S COOL.

BUT SINCE YOU'RE SO FOND'A SCHOOL, I'M GONNA *EDUCATE* YOU A LITTLE.

YOU AIN'T *WITH US*, THAT DON'T JUST MEAN YOU'RE *AGAINST US*...

...IT MEANS YOU'RE *ALONE*.

AND ALONE, YOU AIN'T *NEVER* GONNA MAKE IT IN THIS WORLD.

TIRED YET, RHODES?
NO, SIR!
EVERLAST
HAD ENOUGH, RHODES?
SIR, NO SIR!
UM, RHODEY, MAYBE WE SHOULD BAIL OUT.
HAHAHA!
NO.
DIE, WAR MACHINE!
BUDDY, THAT IS A BIG...

HELL NO!

SHAK-A-DOOM

LAST ONE'S ESCAPING. I TAGGED HIM, BUT--

HIS COMMS ARE DOWN, SO HE CAN'T CALL FOR HELP, BUT HIS ENGINES ARE FUNCTIONING. AND HE'S MORE MANEUVERABLE THAN WE ARE.

I DON'T LIKE LOOSE ENDS. I LIKE 'EM EVEN LESS WHEN THEY CRASH ON CIVILIANS.

GONNA HAVE TO FINISH THIS OLD SCHOOL.

GNRR

VREET

AUTO-REPAIR FIXED THE DAMAGE TO YOUR ARMOR WHILE YOU WERE LOCKED IN. AND YOU'RE FULLY POWERED UP.

THIS SATELLITE GETS BETTER EVERY MINUTE. TOO BAD IT'S NOT ATMOSPHERE-WORTHY.

I REACTIVATED THE CLOAKING SYSTEM AND MOVED US FROM GEOSYNCHRONOUS TO A MOLNIYA ORBIT. THE STATION SHOULD BE SAFE FROM FURTHER ATTACKS.

GOOD. I'M GOING AFTER OUR RABBIT. GIVE ME A GLOBAL SITREP...

...I WANT TO KNOW HOW BAD THINGS ARE.

TRANSMITTING. AND RHODEY... BRACE YOURSELF.

DAMN.

NEW YORK, WAKANDA, LONDON...THIS IS WORLDWIDE.

ALL RIGHT. YOU MONSTERS WANT WAR?

YOU GOT IT...

...SOUTH PHILLY STYLE.

ZRAKK-A-CHOOM

WAIT A MINUTE. SUZI, THE GPS SAYS I'M IN--

RUSSIA. THAT'S WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU BOUNCE AROUND IN ORBIT.

DAMN IT, MANHATTAN WAS UNDER ATTACK!

LOTS OF PLACES ARE. THE CLOSEST ACTION TO YOU IS AT *TATISCHEVO*— A NUCLEAR WEAPONS DEPOT. RUSSIA'S HOMEGROWN HEROES, THE *WINTER GUARD*, ARE ON SCENE... BUT THEY'RE OVERWHELMED.

SORTING BY PROXIMITY AND URGENCY, THE NEXT MOST VIABLE TARGETS ARE WAKANDA AND TOKYO. I UNDERSTAND YOU WANTING TO HELP OUT IN THE STATES...

...BUT WHO KNOWS WHAT COULD HAPPEN IN THE TIME IT TAKES YOU TO GET THERE? HOW MANY PEOPLE MIGHT DIE?

THAT'LL HAPPEN NO MATTER WHAT I DO. IT'S JUST A QUESTION OF WHERE.

RHODEY? ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

I KNOW TONY ASKED ME TO CARRY ON THE FIGHT FOR HIM. AND I DON'T MIND. HE'S MY BEST FRIEND; I'D DO IT ANYWAY.

BUT I NEVER WANTED TO BE TONY. ALWAYS AVOIDED THE KIND OF CHOICES HE MAKES... PLAYING GOD WITH PEOPLES' LIVES...

YOU'VE LED MEN INTO COMBAT MORE TIMES THAN I CAN COUNT.

SURE...AND IF THEY GOT KILLED, SO DID I. THAT, I CAN HANDLE.

BUT I'M SUPPOSED TO BE THE GUY ON THE FRONT LINES. NOT THE ONE DECIDING WHO LIVES AND WHO DIES FROM HUNDREDS OF MILES AWAY.

RHODEY.

I DIDN'T KNOW THEY TAUGHT *CRYING* IN THE MARINES.

PLOTTING A COURSE FOR TATISCHEVO.

AND SUZI... THANKS.

<DARKSTAR! I CAN'T REACH THE SHIPS, CAN YOU--?>
<I'M TRYING, BUT HE'S TOO STRONG!>
<OUR PILOTS ARE BEING MASSACRED!>
CRIMSON DYNAMO
DARKSTAR
RED GUARDIAN
URSA MAJOR
TATISCHEVO, RUSSIA.

I GOT THIS.

UGLY HERE'S INFRINGING ON THE WEST COAST AVENGERS' TRADEMARK...

...AND THAT MAKES THIS PERSONAL.

SHOOM

TOP PRIORITY'S THE NUKES. ARE THEY SECURE?

DYNAMO? IS MY TRANSLATOR MALFUNCTIONING?

I UNDERSTAND YOU PERFECTLY.

LEAVE THIS PLACE, WAR MACHINE. RUSSIA DOES NOT WANT OR REQUIRE THE INITIATIVE'S HELP. AMERICA--DESPITE WHAT YOU AND YOUR BOSS TONY STARK MAY THINK--IS NOT THE WORLD'S POLICE.

WHAT?!?

ARE YOU CRAZY? DO YOU KNOW WHAT THE SKRULLS COULD DO WITH A NUCLEAR ARSENAL?

I'M NOT HERE WITH THE INITIATIVE, I'M JUST TRYING TO HELP. YOUR PEOPLE ARE GETTING SLAUGHTERED! YOU NEED ME!

YOU ARE NOT WELCOME HERE.

GO NOW OR FACE THE CONSEQUENCES.

FINE.

YOU WANT TO PLAY IT LIKE THAT, I'LL GO HELP THE **BLACK PANTHER.**

JIM, THE RUSSIANS ARE LOSING. IF THE SKRULLS SEIZE THOSE MISSILES--

I KNOW. BUT IF THE WINTER GUARD'S FIGHTING ME INSTEAD OF THE ENEMY, THINGS GET EVEN WORSE.

THE CRIMSON DYNAMO WAS ACTING ON ORDERS. IT WASN'T HIS CHOICE.

MIGHT AS WELL HAVE BEEN. THEIR BRASS WANTS THEM HANDLING THIS ALONE. LIKE IT OR NOT, THAT MEANS THEY'RE...

...ALONE...

HELL WITH IT.

GHAHH!

<COURAGE, MIKHAIL. AS SOON AS I'M ABLE I'LL-->

KRAKOOM

KTANG

GIVE ME A MOMENT, WAR MACHINE, AND I WILL--

SHUK

<NO!>

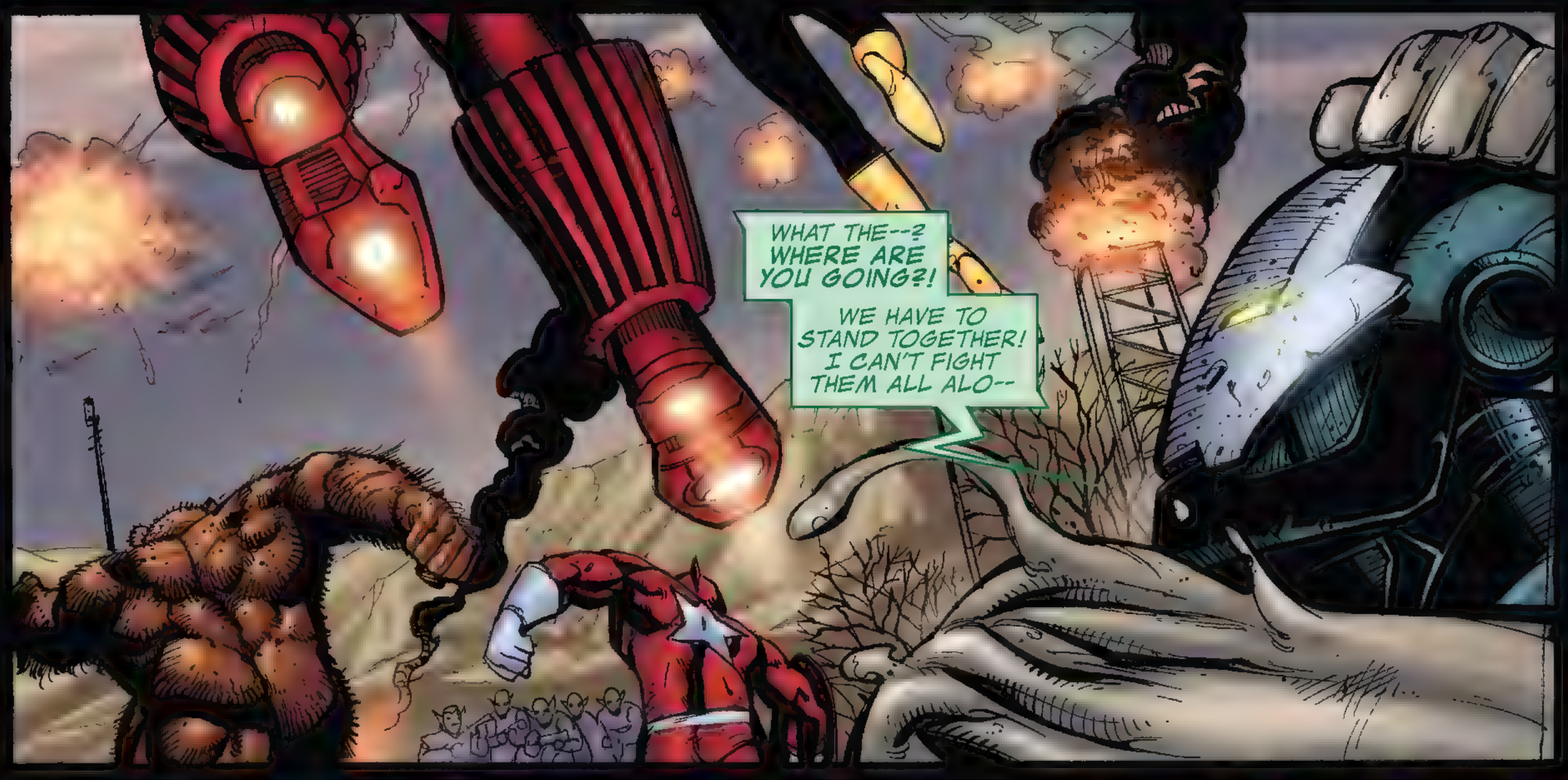
<WE HAVE ORDERS--SUPPORT OUR AIRCRAFT AND INFANTRYMEN. WAR MACHINE IS TO RECEIVE NO AID WHATSOEVER.>

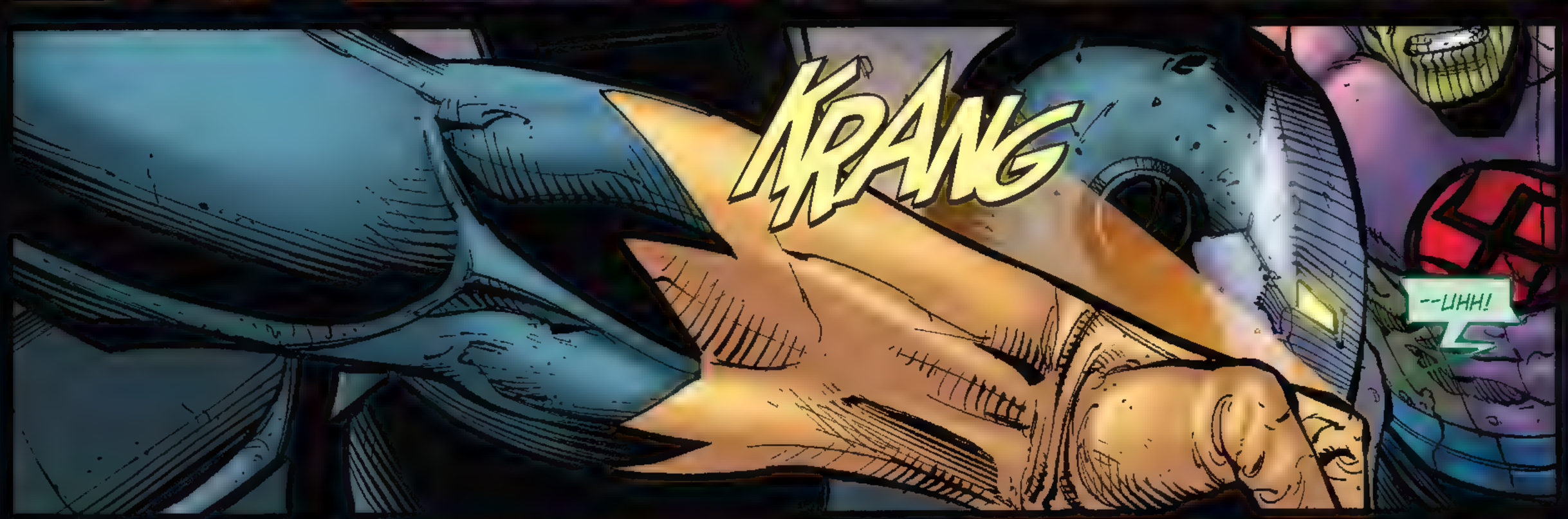
<BUT THEY'LL KILL HIM! HE CAME HERE TO HELP-->

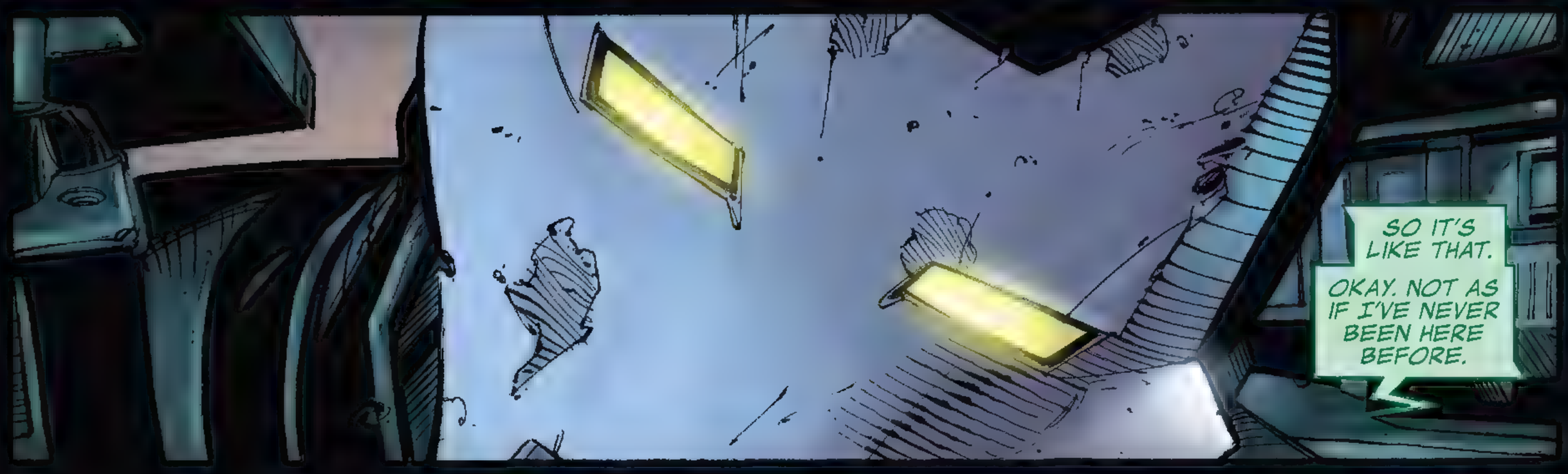
<HE CAME HERE WITHOUT CLEARANCE. VIOLATED OUR BORDERS.>

<IT HAS BEEN DECIDED AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL. HE IS ON HIS OWN. >

<VERY WELL THEN.>
<WE WILL DO AS WE MUST.>


WHAT THE--? WHERE ARE YOU GOING?!
WE HAVE TO STAND TOGETHER! I CAN'T FIGHT THEM ALL ALO--


KRANG
--UHH!


SO IT'S LIKE THAT.
OKAY. NOT AS IF I'VE NEVER BEEN HERE BEFORE.

KTANG

SHLIK

COME ON! WHAT, YOU THOUGHT I'D GO DOWN EASY?

CH-CHANK

KA-CHUNK

KA-CHUNK

FZZHOOM

NOT A CHANCE. YOU BEST BELIEVE I'M GONNA TAKE AS MANY OF YOU WITH ME AS I--

WHAROOM

--GUHH!

IS THAT... ALL YOU GOT...?

...IS... THAT...

...ALL..

NNHH...

NO CLEAR DELINEATION WHERE THE MAN ENDS AND THE MACHINE BEGINS.

TRANSLATOR ENGAGED.

NOT TO WORRY. BIOLOGICAL FUNCTION IS DEPENDENT ON THE SUIT OF ARMOR.

ALL WE NEED DO IS REMOVE IT...

...AND THE HUMAN WILL BE DEAD IN MOMENTS.

THEN WE CAN *DISSECT HIM* AT OUR LEISURE

TO BE CONCLUDED!

SECRET INVASION™

WAR MACHINE®

WEAPON OF S.H.I.E.L.D.

D[illegible]STER OF S.H.I.E.L.D.

MARVEL

35

GAGE
CHEN
FLOREA
RAMOS

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When billionaire industrialist Tony Stark dons sophisticated steel-mesh armor of his own design, he becomes a living high-tech weapon – the world's greatest human fighting machine!

THE INVINCIBLE IRON MAN

James "Rhodey" Rhodes has been many things – a Marine, a pilot, and Tony Stark's best friend. When Stark can no longer fight on as Iron Man, Rhodey dons his own suit of armor – one with the power of an entire army in the hands of one man!

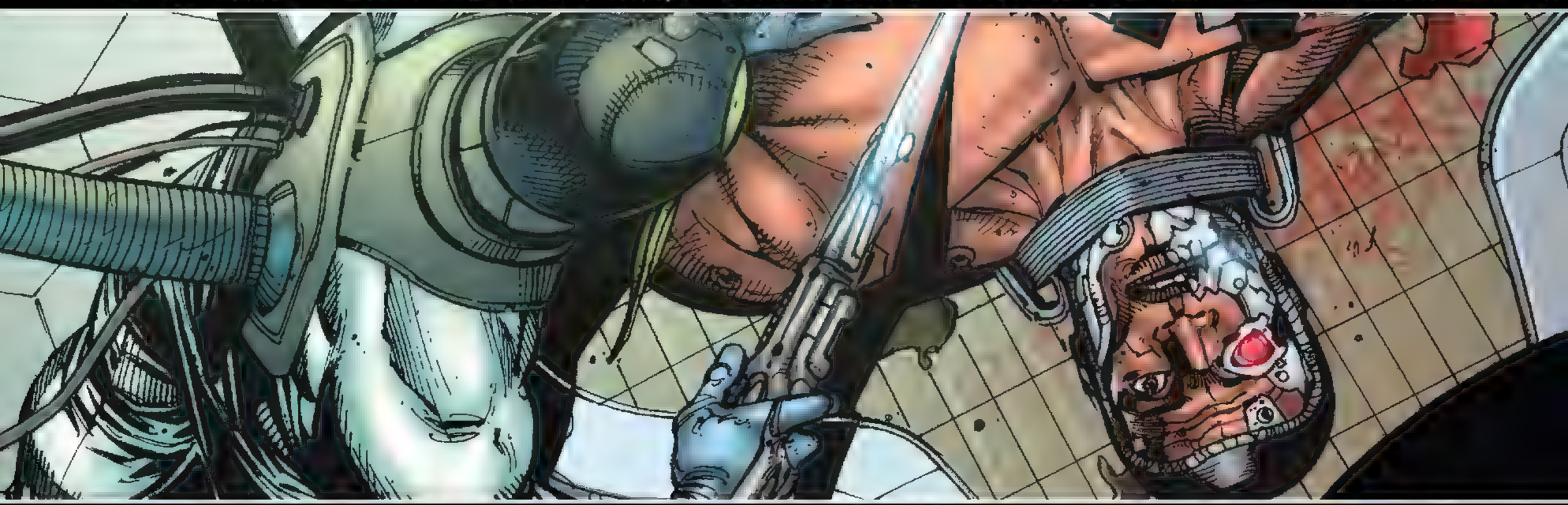
WAR MACHINE

SECRET INVASION

For months, the shape-shifting Skrulls replaced key figures in the human and superhuman communities. After sowing the seeds of fear and paranoia, the Skrulls struck to claim the Earth as their own – and hit Iron Man with an alien virus that disabled not only his armor, but every piece of technology designed by Tony Stark throughout the world!

Meanwhile, War Machine received a coded message from Tony telling him that his tech was virus-free, and also gave him directions to a secret satellite still in operation. There, Rhodey found former Force Works member Suzi Endo, a.k.a. Cybermancer, who was also contacted by Tony. The duo was then attacked by a Skrull fleet…and Suzi showed Rhodey how to transform the entire satellite into a giant War Machine!

After defeating the Skrull squadron, Rhodey left the satellite and returned to Earth, landing in Tatischevo, Russia, where the outnumbered super-team known as the Winter Guard was attempting to defend a nuclear base from a Skrull attack. Crimson Dynamo warned War Machine to stay out of their business, but Rhodey refused. Joining the fight, War Machine was eventually overwhelmed... and woke up on a Skrull dissection table!



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ABOARD THE SKRULL WARSHIP "EMPIRE'S GLORY".

ENOUGH. THE TERRAN IS TAKING TOO LONG TO DIE.

WE CAN BROOK NO MORE DELAYS. BEGIN DISSECTION IMMEDIATELY.

WAR MACHINE
WEAPON OF S.H.I.E.L.D.

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VREET

WHAT--?

VZASH

NO! WE REMOVED ALL ITS WEAPONS!

ZREEE

I AM A WEAPON.

NOT POSSIBLE.

AND I'LL BE A *DEAD* WEAPON IF I DON'T GET MY ARMOR BACK ON *NOW*.

HNGH!

THAT TOOK... ALL I HAD LEFT...

THERE GOES THE ALARM...BUT IT WON'T MATTER IF I CAN'T REACH MY HELMET AND CHEST PLATE... ONLY THINGS KEEPING ME ALIVE...

RUNT RUNT RUNT

ALMOST THERE...

...ALMOST...

<READY WEAPONS. THE EARTHER MAY STILL BE-->

<--DANGEROUS-->

KRAKAKOOOM

SUZI? YOU RECEIVING?

RHODEY, THANK GOD. WHEN YOUR VITAL SIGNS FLATLINED, I THOUGHT--

I'M FINE. THE SKRULLS TRIED TO STEAL MY RIDE. DIDN'T RECKON WITH THE SECURITY SYSTEM.

REACTIVATING GPS. CONFIRM.

COPY. YOU'RE STILL OVER TATISCHEVO, RUSSIA.

GOOD. 'CAUSE I MEAN TO FINISH MY BUSINESS THERE.

"I APPLAUD THE SENTIMENT, RHODEY, BUT THE SKRULLS HAVE TOO MUCH FIREPOWER FOR YOU TO TAKE ON ALONE.

"EVEN IF THE *WINTER GUARD* HADN'T REFUSED TO HELP YOU, I DOUBT THEY'D BE ENOUGH TO TURN THE TIDE."

I DON'T KNOW WHAT CHOICE WE HAVE. SURRENDERING RUSSIA'S NUKES SEEMS LIKE A **REALLY** BAD IDEA.

THAT'S NOT WHAT I'M SUGGESTING, RHODES. I'M JUST SAYING YOU SHOULDN'T BE IN TOO BIG A HURRY TO GET OFF THAT SHIP.

BECAUSE I MIGHT HAVE A WAY TO EVEN THE ODDS.

I'VE BEEN ANALYZING THE WRECKAGE OF THE SKRULL SHIPS WE DESTROYED.

IT'S A LITTLE DICEY, BUT I THINK I'VE PUZZLED OUT ENOUGH OF THEIR LANGUAGE AND CODES TO TRANSMIT SIMPLE COMMANDS...

BRATTATATTA

...IF YOU CAN GET TO A CONTROL TERMINAL.

SAY NO MORE.

OKAY. YOU'RE IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT, SUZI...

...SHOW ME WHAT YOU'VE GOT!

VRAKASHA!

NICE. BUT I'M GETTING A LOT MORE COMPANY ON THE BRIDGE...AND THE OTHER WARSHIPS ARE LOCKING WEAPONS ON US.

GUESS THEY'RE NOT WORRIED ABOUT KILLING A FEW HUNDRED OF THEIR OWN.

ARE YOU KIDDING? EVERY SKRULL ON THAT SHIP WOULD SACRIFICE THEIR ENTIRE BRIGADE TO TAKE YOU OUT.

SO I SAY...

...LET'S GIVE 'EM THE CHANGE!

WARBOY UNLEASHED

<HE--HE DESTROYED THREE OF THEM. THREE SKRULL WARSHIPS IN LESS THAN A MINUTE!>

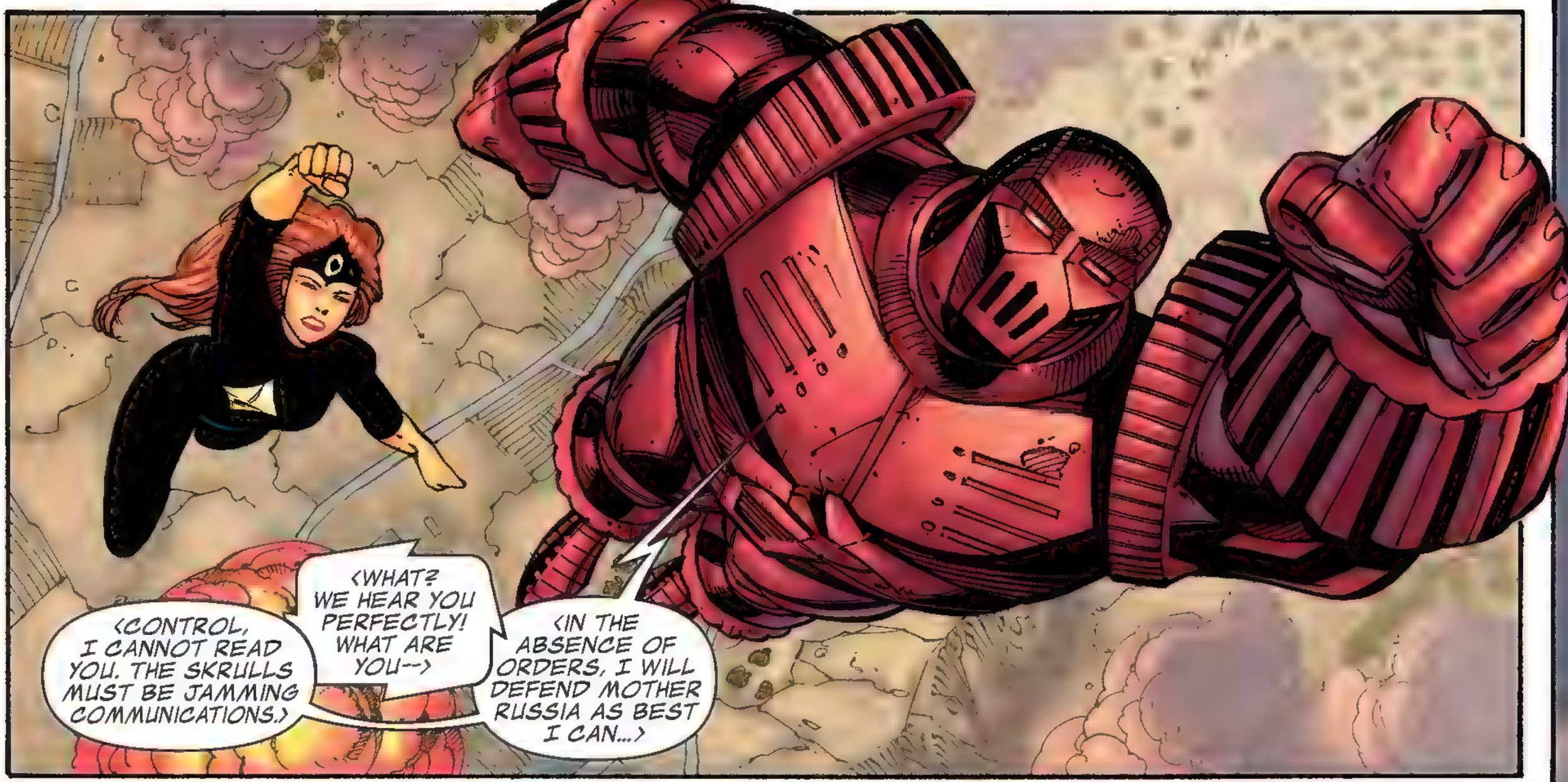
<I SAW, DARKSTAR. CONTROL, DID YOU-->

<CONTROL TO CRIMSON DYNAMO. YOUR ORDERS STAND.>

WAR MACHINE IS VIOLATING OUR BORDERS. DO NOT AID HIM IN ANY WAY. ACKNOWLEDGE.

<CRIMSON DYNAMO! ACKNOWLEDGE!>

<DYNAMO! ACKNOWLEDGE IMMEDIATELY!>


‹CONTROL, I CANNOT READ YOU. THE SKRULLS MUST BE JAMMING COMMUNICATIONS.›
‹WHAT? WE HEAR YOU PERFECTLY! WHAT ARE YOU-->
‹IN THE ABSENCE OF ORDERS, I WILL DEFEND MOTHER RUSSIA AS BEST I CAN...›

ZZRAKASHH
‹...BY BLASTING THE ENEMY TO HELL!›

GLAD WE'RE ON THE SAME SIDE.

WE ALWAYS WERE. I AM GLAD I DID NOT REALIZE IT TOO LATE.

SUZI, THEIR SHIELDS ARE AT FULL STRENGTH. ANYTHING WE CAN DO ABOUT THAT?

SORRY. NOT FROM UP HERE.

I MAY BE ABLE TO HELP.

UNDERSTOOD. BUT WE CAN ONLY SURPRISE THEM ONCE. WAR MACHINE, DO AS I DO.

RHODEY, I JUST ACCESSED DARKSTAR'S FILES. I CAN'T TELL YOU WHY, IN CASE THE ENEMY'S MONITORING TRANSMISSIONS, BUT FOLLOW THEIR LEAD.

OKAY, BUT IT LOOKS TO ME LIKE SHE'S SUICIDAL.

NOT TO WORRY, WAR MACHINE.

MY *DARKFORCE ENERGY* CAN BE MORE THAN A BARRIER. SOMETIMES...

BU-DOOM

...IT CAN BE A DOOR!

ZZZAXX

THRAKKA-CHOOM

DARKSTAR! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

I...WILL SURVIVE. TELEPORTATION IS...DIFFICULT.

WAR MACHINE! THE SKY IS OURS!

DON'T BREAK OUT THE VODKA JUST YET. WE'VE STILL GOT GROUND TROOPS ACTIVE...

"...NOT TO MENTION THE TWO **SUPER-SKRULLS**. THOSE SUCKERS ALREADY TOOK ME DOWN ONCE TODAY."

AH, BUT THIS TIME...

...YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

I'VE GOT THIS ONE. URSA MAJOR, HELP RED GUARDIAN.

HIS POWER IS INCREDIBLE. ARE YOU SURE--?

ABSOLUTELY.

"THE SKRULLS ARE MASTERS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE.

"OVER TWENTY MILLION RUSSIANS DIED IN WORLD WAR II. IT'S NO ACCIDENT THEY SENT AN AGENT WITH THE POWERS OF NAZI SUPER-SOLDIERS.

"BUT THE THING ABOUT PSY-OPS IS...

"...YOU CAN TURN THEM AROUND."

CHUNK

THE RUSSIAN SOLDIERS ARE RALLYING.

IMPRESSIVE, MR. RHODES. YOU MAY NOT LIKE PLAYING GENERAL, BUT YOU'RE GOOD AT IT.

KRANG

THANKS, SUZI, BUT THAT DOESN'T-- UNGH!

--MEAN MUCH RIGHT NOW.

IGNORANT PRIMITIVES. YOU THINK YOU'VE WON...

...BUT THERE ARE NO SKRULL DEFEATS.

ONLY DEGREES OF VICTORY

EVERYONE BACK!!

WE CAME TO SET YOU FREE. IF YOU CANNOT BE SAVED IN THIS LIFE...

...THEN IT SHALL HAPPEN IN THE NEXT.

RHODEY, HE'S BECOME PURE ENERGY. HE'S TRYING TO--

DETONATE THE WARHEADS. I KNOW.

BUT THIS SUIT'S DESIGNED...

...TO ABSORB ENERGY.

NOT THAT MUCH! NOT WITHOUT OVERLOADING! YOU HAVE TO RELEASE IT!

THAT'S...THE PLAN. JUST...NEED TO GET...A SAFE DISTANCE AWAY.

JIM, YOUR READINGS ARE OFF THE CHARTS!

I KNOW, DAMN IT...

...I KNOW.

RELEASE

<TOO BRIGHT... DYNAMO, CAN YOU SEE? DID HE--?>

<I'M TRYING, BUT I...I CAN'T...>

<WAIT. THERE HE IS!>

<HE'S ALIVE! HE-->

<--OH.>

WAR MACHINE! YOU ARE IN VIOLATION OF RUSSIAN AIRSPACE. SURRENDER IMMEDIATELY OR BE SHOT DOWN. THIS IS YOUR ONLY WARNING.

RHODEY, THOSE ARE SU-30MK'S. AT YOUR CURRENT POWER LEVELS, OUTRUNNING THEM'S NOT AN OPTION.

I FIGURED THAT OUT, SUZI. GUESS I'VE GOT NO CHOICE BUT TO--

<FLIGHT LEADER, TERMINATE PURSUIT IMMEDIATELY.>

<STAND DOWN, CRIMSON DYNAMO. YOU ARE IN DEFIANCE OF-->

<I BELIEVE THE SKRULLS HAVE INFILTRATED OUR COMMAND STRUCTURE. UNTIL WE DETERMINE OTHERWISE, I ACT ON **MY OWN** AUTHORITY.>

<WAR MACHINE LED US TO VICTORY OVER THE INVADERS. ANYONE ATTACKING HIM WILL BE PRESUMED TO BE **ON THE SIDE** OF THE INVADERS.>

<THIS IS **YOUR** ONLY WARNING.>

...

<I'LL BE FILING A FULL REPORT.>

<THERE **WILL** BE CONSEQUENCES.>

<THERE ALWAYS ARE.>

MY TRANSLATOR PICKED YOU UP. YOU REALLY THINK THE SKRULLS REPLACED YOUR LEADERS?

NO. I THINK THEY ARE BEING UNREASONABLE. BUT I CAN BE UNREASONABLE TOO.

YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO DO THAT.

CONSIDER IT ATONEMENT FOR MY EARLIER MISTAKE.

AND THE FULFILLMENT OF MY OATH...TO SERVE THE PEOPLE OF RUSSIA. NOT THE GOVERNMENT. THE **PEOPLE.**

THE WORLD IS A TROUBLED PLACE, WAR MACHINE. ITS LEADERS SEEM TO CONFUSE **ARROGANCE** WITH **WISDOM.**

WE NEED GOOD MEN. MEN WITH THE POWER TO HELP, THE FREEDOM TO ACT, THE JUDGMENT TO CHOOSE A COURSE... AND THE COURAGE TO FACE THE CONSEQUENCES.

UNFORTUNATELY, SUCH MEN ARE RARE.

FORTUNATELY, **YOU** ARE ONE OF THEM.

GOOD LUCK TO YOU, WAR MACHINE.

GOOD LUCK TO ALL OF US, DYNAMO.

WE'RE GONNA NEED IT.

RHODEY'S STORY CONTINUES NEXT MONTH IN WAR MACHINE #1!

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THE INVINCIBLE IRON MAN®

TM

CAN EVEN THE GOLDEN AVENGER'S *NEW ARMOR* STOP STAR WELL FROM *CRASHING TO EARTH?!*

THE TRIAL AND THE TRAGEDY!

BOB LAYTON

SPECIAL BONUS!

NEVER BEFORE REVEALED--
SHELL-HEAD'S 1ST ADVENTURE IN

VIET NAM!

STAN LEE PRESENTS: THE INVINCIBLE IRON MAN®

TWO DAYS AGO, SEVERAL HUNDRED INHABITANTS OF THE SMALL MIDWESTERN HAMLET OF ALLANTOWN, IOWA, SUDDENLY DIED FROM A MYSTERIOUS BARRAGE OF MICROWAVE RADIATION.

TWO HOURS AGO, IRON MAN -- CLAD IN EXPERIMENTAL ARMOR ENABLING HIM TO SPEND EXTENDED PERIODS BEYOND EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE -- HAD DISCOVERED THE SOURCE OF THAT RADIATION: "STAR WELL", A TOP SECRET SPACE STATION BUILT BY THE ROXXON OIL CORPORATION.

THEN, TWO MINUTES AGO, HE HAD FOUGHT SUNTURION -- A ONCE-HUMAN MICROWAVE BEING WHO IS STAR WELL'S DESIGNER AND GUARDIAN -- UNTIL THE FORCE OF THEIR COMBAT HAD RIPPED LOOSE THE STATION'S CORE, SENDING IT PLUMMETING AT EVER-INCREASING SPEED TOWARDS EARTH! SO THAT NOW, IRON MAN CAN BUT WONDER IN HORROR AT WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN... TWO MINUTES FROM NOW!

SUNFALL

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COME ON, SUNTURION! WE'VE GOT TO *DESTROY* THAT CORE BEFORE IT HITS!

NO! I-I CAN'T! I *CREATED* STAR WELL! CREATED IT TO SAVE THE HUMAN RACE!

STAR WELL'S PURPOSE WAS TO TRANSMIT SOLAR POWER TO EARTH THROUGH TIGHT-BEAM MICROWAVES, ASSURING A VIRTUALLY ENDLESS SUPPLY OF HIGH-GRADE ENERGY! AND THAT COULD HAVE REDUCED THE GLOBAL TENSIONS THAT THREATEN TO START WORLD WAR III!

FACE REALITY, SUNTURION--THE KEY WORDS IN YOUR ARGUMENT ARE "*COULD HAVE*"! PAST TENSE! THE STATION IS IN PIECES, THE CORE IS FRACTURED!

YOUR *MOTIVES* MAY HAVE BEEN HONORABLE, BUT THIS ISN'T A QUESTION OF PHILOSOPHY! IF THAT CORE HITS, *MILLIONS* COULD DIE! CAN YOU LIVE WITH THAT, SUNTURION?

BLAST IT, MAN, CAN YOU?

NO.

=WHEW=

GOT TO SET MY ARMOR FOR RE-ENTRY, THEN TRIGGER MY BOOT THRUSTERS. EVEN SO, SUNTURION IS LEAVING ME BEHIND AS IF I WERE WALKING!

I'LL HAVE TO CHECK INTO MICROWAVES AS A POWER MODE WHEN I GET BACK TO EARTH.

THAT IS, IF I GET BACK!

--UNTIL SUDDENLY, SUNTURION BEGINS TO SPARKLE, TO DIS-APPEAR--

--AND THEN TO REAPPEAR A HEARTBEAT LATER IN THE CONTROL ROOM OF THE DISABLED STAR WELL!

IT'S TOO BAD IRON MAN DISCONNECTED STAR WELL'S SELF-DESTRUCT SYSTEM*-- IT COULD HAVE COME IN HANDY ABOUT NOW.

*LAST ISSUE. --Jim

AS IT IS, I'LL HAVE TO TRY USING THE STATION'S MANEUVERING ROCKETS AS *RETROS!*

KLIK

BZZT

AND JUST HOPE THEY SLOW THE CORE DOWN LONG ENOUGH TO--

--OH, BLAST! IT--

--DIDN'T WORK, IRON MAN!

WHA--?! GEEZ, I WISH YOU'D STOP POPPING IN AND OUT LIKE THAT!

NEVERTHELESS, I'M AFRAID YOURS ISN'T THE ONLY BAD NEWS!

LIKE DESPERATE STEEDS IN A ONE-SIDED RACE, MEN AND MACHINE ROCKET TOWARDS AN UNSUSPECTING EARTH--

I'VE JUST CALCULATED THAT, GIVEN ITS CURRENT SPEED AND ANGLE OF DESCENT, STAR WELL IS GOING TO SMASH INTO THE EARTH RIGHT ON TOP OF SARASOTA, FLORIDA!

OUR ONLY HOPE IS TO ALTER THE STATION'S COURSE, SEND IT INTO AN UNINHABITED AREA!

AND SINCE THERE'S NO WAY I CAN REACH THE STATION TO GIVE IT A PUSH BEFORE IT HITS, WE'LL HAVE TO RELY ON THE *DEFLECTOR BEAM* FROM MY CHEST PROJECTION UNIT!

HOWEVER, THAT FINAL HOPE PROVES FUTILE, AS THE THIN BEAM OF FOCUSED FORCE STRIKES STAR WELL--AND CAUSES NARY A WOBBLE IN ITS FIERY FLIGHT!

NO GOOD. I'M TOO WEAK. OUR BATTLE DEPLETED MY POWER RESERVES. AND WITHOUT A MASSIVE ENERGY SOURCE TO RECHARGE THEM...

...THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO.

IRON MAN... TRY YOUR DEFLECTOR BEAM AGAIN.

BUT I JUST TOLD YOU, I'M TOO WEAK TO--

PLEASE! JUST TRY!

WELL, OKAY. BUT I DON'T SEE WHAT GOOD IT WILL--

--HNH?! I-I FEEL POWER! AN INCREDIBLE SURGE OF POWER! A-AND MY DEFLECTOR BEAM--IT'S GETTING *STRONGER!*

IT'S SUNTURION! IT'S GOT TO BE! HIS BODY IS COMPOSED OF PURE MICROWAVE ENERGY-- AND HE'S USING THAT ENERGY TO POWER MY DEFLECTOR CIRCUITS!

YES, BUT HAS THAT POWER BOOST COME IN TIME? IRON MAN CAN BUT PRAY AS HE CONCENTRATES--

--WHILE MILES BELOW, STARWELL STATION CLEAVES THE EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE LIKE A TORCH THROUGH BUTTER--

--UNTIL MERE SECONDS BEFORE IMPACT, THE STRENGTHENED DEFLECTOR BEAM STRIKES, ALTERING THE STATION'S TRAJECTORY BY A SINGLE DEGREE--

--AND CAUSING IT TO CRASH WITH STUNNING FORCE INTO--

--THE GULF OF MEXICO!

SPLABOOM

NOW THERE'S SOMETHING YOU DON'T SEE EVERY DAY, EDGAR.

WHAT'S THAT, CHAUNCEY?

A SUPER HERO KNOCKING A SATELLITE INTO THE GULF.

MY, MY, MY.

SUNTURION! WE DID IT! WE--

--SUNTURION?

SUNTURION!

BUT THE ONLY ANSWER THE GOLDEN AVENGER HEARS IS THE REVERBERATING RUMBLE OF DYING THUNDER.

AND AS HE HOVERS QUIETLY OVER THE SLOWLY SETTLING WATERS, IRON MAN KNOWS THAT THAT IS THE ONLY ANSWER HE'LL HAVE.

FOR THE ENERGY HE HAD USED TO SAVE SARASOTA HAD BEEN THE VERY ESSENCE OF A MAN.

A MAN WILLING, FOR THE SAKE OF OTHERS, TO ABANDON NOT ONLY HIS LIFE, BUT HIS LIFE'S DREAM AS WELL.

AND THAT, IN THE END, IS THE NOBLEST SACRIFICE OF ALL...

EPILOGUE: THE NEXT DAY, AFTER RETURNING PROTOTYPE ARMOR TO A PRIVATE LAB FOR FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS--

--THAT ARMOR'S BUILDER RETURNS TO HIS OFFICES AT STARK INTERNATIONAL--

--WHERE...

ONLY ONE MESSAGE, MR. STARK. FROM ROXXON OIL. THEY'RE SPONSORING A CELEBRITY GOLF TOURNAMENT--

--WITH THE PROCEEDS GOING TO FAMILIES OF THE VICTIMS OF THAT ANTHRAX EPIDEMIC IN ALLANTOWN, IOWA.

"ANTHRAX"? IS THAT WHAT THEY'RE CALLING IT?

YES, SIR. SHALL I TELL THEM YOU'LL ATTEND?

RoXon

Dear Mr. Stark,

You are cord

articipate in our celeb

Golf Tournament with

to the families of All

Sin

Jon

WHAT YOU CAN TELL THEM, MRS ARBOGAST--

--IS THAT THEY MAY KINDLY STICK THEIR INVITATION UP THEIR CORPORATE ASSETS! IN THE MEANTIME, PLEASE HOLD MY CALLS, WILL YOU?

I THINK I'D LIKE TO BE ALONE FOR AWHILE...

When millionaire industrialist *Tony Stark*, inventor extraordinaire, garbs himself in solar-charged, steel-mesh armor he becomes the world's greatest human fighting machine...

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE INVINCIBLE IRON MAN®

DAVID MICHELINIE *writer/plot* • JOE BROZOWSKI *pencil art* • BOB LAYTON *finished art/plot* • JOHN COSTANZA *letters* • BOB SHAREN *colors* • JIM SALICRUP *editor* • JIM SHOOTER *editor-in-chief*

THERE COMES A TIME IN THE LIFE OF EVERYONE FAMOUS WHEN HE MUST FACE A GATHERING OF HIS ADMIRERS AND DETRACTORS. SUCH MEETINGS ARE CALLED "CONVENTIONS".

AND IT IS FOR ONE SUCH ASSEMBLAGE THAT MILLIONAIRE INDUSTRIALIST ANTHONY STARK IS CURRENTLY BOUND-- TO BE SPECIFIC: THE 14TH ANNUAL CONCLAVE OF ELECTRONICS ENGINEERS AND INNOVATORS, BEING HELD AT THE PARK SHERATON HOTEL IN DALLAS, TEXAS.

HOWEVER, AS A SLEEK, PRIVATE LEAR JET LEAVES THE RUNWAY AT STARK INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, TONY STARK FINDS HIS PLANS SUDDENLY ALTERED BY A RATHER FRIGHTENING DETOUR!

LOOK OUT! THAT TRANSPORT'S HEADING STRAIGHT AT US! WE'RE GOING TO *CRASH!*

SI 9654

S-I

BUY epic

GAS

Apocalypse Then

NOT IF I CAN HELP IT, CHIEF! BUT YOU'D BETTER START HANDIN' OUT THE AIRSICK BAGS, 'CAUSE THIS IS GONNA BE--

--TIGHT!

;G...G... GULP!;

TOWER TO S.I.-1. SORRY ABOUT THAT LITTLE MIX-UP. WE HAD A TEMPORARY PROBLEM WITH OUR GROUND CONTROL READOUT. GLAD NO ONE WAS HURT.

YOU'LL PROBABLY HAVE TO MAKE A STATEMENT TO AN F.A.A. HEARING WHEN YOU GET BACK, THOUGH.

I GOT A STATEMENT I'D LIKE TO MAKE RIGHT NOW, DUDE, 'CEPT IT'D PROBABLY MELT YOUR EARPHONES!

UH, RIGHT. TOWER OUT!

RHODEY, HAVE I EVER TOLD YOU THAT YOUR FLYING SKILLS MAKE WALDO PEPPER LOOK LIKE A KID WITH A KITE?

Y'MEAN THIS WEEK?

SERIOUSLY, JIM, I SOMETIMES THINK YOU COULD FLY THE PANTS OFF OF IRON MAN HIMSELF. AND AS FOR HAVING JUST SAVED MY LIFE--

SAY, BOSS, FORGET IT. I WAS JUST DOIN' MY JOB.

BUT, SETTLING BACK INTO THE CRUSHED VELOUR OF THE SEAT CUSHION, TONY STARK KNOWS THAT LIFE-SAVING IS NOT A PART OF HIS PILOT'S SALARIED DUTIES. FOR IF IT HAD BEEN--

--HE WOULD NOT BE ALIVE TO THINK ABOUT IT TODAY!

THE GLEAMING-NEW LEAR JET SHOOTS SOUTHWARDS THROUGH THE AFTERNOON SKY, AND THE RELAXING INVENTOR FINDS HIS MIND FILING BACKWARDS, SIFTING THROUGH MEMORIES--

--ARRIVING FINALLY AT SOUTHEAST ASIA DURING THE VIETNAMESE WAR, WHERE HE HAD COME TO TEST HIS THEORIES OF REVERSE MAGNETISM WITH NEW AMERICAN ORDNANCE...

...AND HAD INSTEAD FALLEN VICTIM TO ONE OF THE VIET CONG'S OLDEST WEAPONS, THE BOOBY-TRAPPED MINE...

WHRAAAAWWW

...ONE THAT HAD LEFT A PIECE OF SHRAPNEL LODGED DANGEROUSLY CLOSE TO HIS HEART.

CAPTURED, HE HAD PRETENDED TO AID FELLOW PRISONER, PROFESSOR YINSEN, IN BUILDING A SUPER-WEAPON FOR A VIETNAMESE DESPOT NAMED WONG-CHU--

--WHEN IN REALITY, THEY HAD CONSTRUCTED A SUIT OF IRON ARMOR WITH WHICH TO HELP KEEP STARK'S RAPIDLY WEAKENING HEART BEATING.

THEN, THREATENED WITH DISCOVERY MERE MOMENTS BEFORE THAT ARMOR COULD BE ACTIVATED, YINSEN HAD BOUGHT THEM TIME--

BDOW DOW DOW

--AT THE COST OF HIS LIFE.

THAT DEBT HAD BEEN REPAID BY TONY STARK AS IRON MAN, WHEN HE HAD FOUGHT WONG-CHU, AND HAD BESTED HIM...

DANGER AMMO DUMP

...ULTIMATELY!

WHAMMM

HE HAD THOUGHT THAT TO BE THE END. BUT WITH HUNDREDS OF MILES OF UNFAMILIAR, ENEMY-HELD JUNGLE BETWEEN HIM AND SAFETY, IT HAD PROVEN MERELY TO BE--

--THE BEGINNING!

AND THUS, A SHORT HALF-HOUR AFTER THAT REALIZATION, IN A CLEARING THICK WITH THE HEAT OF A MIDDAY SUN AND A NEAR-FRAZZLED TEMPER...

BLAST! THIS BIRD AIN'T NEVER GONNA FLY AGAIN!

U.S. 43

MAYBE IF I'D SEEN WHERE THOSE ROCKETS COME FROM, I'D'VE BEEN ABLE TO DODGE 'EM. BUT INTELLIGENCE SAID THERE WEREN'T ANY VC LAUNCHERS WITHIN MILES!
SHOOT, GUESS IT MUSTA BEEN "SWAMP GAS" THAT TURNED MY CHOPPER INTO--
CLANK!
--EH? SOUNDS LIKE HEAVY MACHINERY! MAYBE A TANK SNEAKIN' UP BEHIND!
AWRIGHT, YA SKUNKY LITTLE PIGS, YOU AIN'T TAKIN' JIM RHODES BY... SUR... PRISE...?
WHAT THE BLOODY--?
PLEASE! DON'T BE AFRAID! I'M AN AMERICAN!
I JUST NEED TO USE YOUR HELICOPTER'S BATTERIES. MY ELECTRICAL SYSTEM IS NEARLY DEPLETED, AND IF I DON'T RECHARGE SOON--
--I'LL DIE!
YOU GONNA DIE ANYWAY, YOU TAKE ONE MORE STEP! I'M WARNIN' YA!
STAY BACK!
RATATATATATATOW
PHWEENG
PTANG
SPEEOW
OH, MAMA. LOOKS LIKE I'VE STEPPED IN THE BAAAD STUFF THIS TIME!
LOOK, I TOLD YOU, I'M NOT GOING TO HURT YOU! ALL I WANT IS--
5

KILL THE SOLDIER AND DESTROY HIS MACHINES!

TAKE NO PRISONERS!

KRAK BDOW

VIP VIP VIP

K-BAM BLAM

VIET CONG PATROL! THEY MUSTA SEEN MY CHOPPER CRASH-LAND--; AGH!;

THEN MAYBE THIS WILL GIVE ME A CHANCE TO SHOW YOU WHOSE SIDE I'M REALLY ON!

THE MACHINE! IT MOVES! KILL IT BEFORE-- EH?! OUR WEAPONS! THEY FLY FROM OUR HANDS!

WH...WHAT THE FLYIN' PHLEGM WAS THAT?

IT'S CALLED *REVERSE MAGNETISM*. AND IT'S JUST ONE OF THE HANDY DEVICES THIS SUIT IS EQUIPPED WITH. LIKE, FOR INSTANCE--

--BOOT-MOUNTED SHORT-RANGE AIR PRESSURE JETS!

SHOOSH!

AIIEEE?!?

FAR OUT!

CHUD

BUT THE VC AIN'T EXACTLY PIKERS! THEY'RE SETTIN' UP AN *RGV7*-- A *BAZOOKA!* THINK YOUR REVERSE FRAMASAN CAN HANDLE THAT?

WELL, IT HASN'T BEEN WIDELY FIELD TESTED YET--

--BUT ACCORDING TO THEORY--

CHOOM

BLAM

--YEP!

WHOOEE! JUST LOOK AT THEM PAJAMA-BOYS RUN! I STILL DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE, METAL MAN, BUT ANYONE WHO CAN ROUT THE VC LIKE THAT IS OKAY IN MY BOOK!

WAP

I APPRECIATE... THE CONFIDENCE, SOLDIER. BUT NOW... ABOUT THOSE BATTERIES...?

POWER... ALMOST DRAINED! CHEST FEELS LIKE ...IT'S ON FIRE!

HOWEVER, THE RECHARGING CONNECTIONS HAD BEEN JURY-RIGGED IN TIME, AND AS THE LAST WATTS OF ELECTRICITY HAD BEEN DRAINED FROM THE HELICOPTER'S BATTERIES...

THANKS, LIEUTENANT. I NEEDED THAT.

UH. DON'T MENTION IT.

WE STILL GOT PROBLEMS, THOUGH. I KNOW THE WAY TO THE AMERICAN DEFENSE PERIMETER, BUT WE'LL HAVE TO WALK IT.

AND WHILE MY LEG WOUND AIN'T BAD, IT IS GONNA SLOW US UP, ESPECIALLY IF THOSE VC COME BACK FOR--

NO PROBLEM, LIEUTENANT, JUST HOP ON UP. WITH THIS SUIT ON, I CAN'T EVEN FEEL THE WEIGHT.

RHODE

WELL, OKAY. BUT IF WE'RE GONNA BE THIS INTIMATE, YOU'D BETTER START CALLIN' ME "RHODEY." MY FRIENDS DO.

ALL RIGHT, RHODEY. AND YOU CAN CALL ME IRON MAN.

"IRON MAN", HUH? I'D NEVER'VE GUESSED...

TIME HAD PASSED SLOWLY, AND AFTER AN HOUR'S TRUDGE THROUGH THE SWELTERING MAZE OF JUNGLE...

SAY, IRON MAN, YOU THINK WE COULD REST A SPELL? I MEAN, IT'S NOT LIKE I DON'T APPRECIATE THE RIDE--

--BUT AN EASY CHAIR YOU'RE NOT!

SURE, RHODEY, HERE YOU GO. I'LL JUST STAND IF YOU DON'T MIND.

I'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THE FLEXIBILITY OF THIS ARMOR WHEN I GET BACK TO MY LAB!

SO TELL ME, TALL, DARK AN' BURNISHED, WHAT BRINGS YOU TO THE 'NAM?

WHAT-- OH, WELL, UM, I WAS HELPING A MAN NAMED TONY STARK WITH SOME EXPERIMENTS. YES, THAT'S IT.

MR. STARK WAS CAPTURED BY THE VIET CONG AND I, ER, HELPED HIM ESCAPE.

ONLY I SORT OF GOT LOST TRYING TO ESCAPE, MYSELF.

IT HAPPENS.

WANT A PUFF?

WELL, ACTUALLY, I'M TRYING TO CUT DOWN. BUT UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, I DON'T SEE WHY NO--

--OOPS! S-SORRY ABOUT THAT, I GUESS I HAVEN'T GOT AS MUCH CONTROL OVER THESE GLOVES AS I'D LIKE.

SAY WHAT?!

AW, MAN, THAT WAS MY LAST ONE! NOW I'LL *HAVE* TO GET BACK TO SAIGON!

PFFT

SPWEEEE

HUH?

SNIPER! WITH A SILENCER! TAKE COVER!

WHY?

WH-WH-WHADYOU MEAN, "WHY", FOOL! BECAUSE--

SPTAK

SPING

PKANK

PFFT PFFT PFFT PFFT

-- CAUSE...

SKRRUMP

KLIHWOOMP

WELL, NOW, WHY DON'T YOU JUST FORGET I EVEN ASKED, ;SHEESH;

SHALL WE GO?

THE JOURNEY HAD CONTINUED, DELIBERATELY, CAUTIOUSLY. AND WHEN ANOTHER HOUR HAD PASSED...

I'LL TRY TO RIG SOME OF THESE REEDS SO YOU CAN GET A DRINK, IRON MAN, AND THEN I THINK WE'D BETTER GET OUT OF HERE.

THESE BOMBED-OUT VILLAGES AREN'T ALWAYS DEAD.

AS A MATTER OF FACT, IT WAS SOMEWHERE AROUND HERE THAT THOSE ROCKETS CLIPPED MY CHOPPER'S TAIL. STRANGE...

AND THAT'S NOT THE ONLY ODD THING, RHODEY, UNLESS VIETNAMESE GEOGRAPHY BREAKS A LOT OF RULES.

BECAUSE IT LOOKS TO ME LIKE THIS STREAM IS COMING RIGHT OUT OF THAT TREE TRUNK!

THAT AIN'T NO TREE--LOOK AT THE LINE ALONG THE GROUND!

YEP, IT'S JUST LIKE I THOUGHT-- *CANVAS!* THIS WHOLE BACK-DROP IS PART OF A FANCY CAMOUFLAGE!

BUT IF THE VIET CONG WOULD GO TO THIS MUCH TROUBLE, THEY MUST BE HIDING SOMETHING--

--BIG!

NO FOOLIN'! THIS MUST BE THE ROCKET BASE THAT ZAPPED MY CHOPPER!

AMMO

WE GOTTA GET BACK TO THE AMERICAN LINES AND CALL AN AIR STRIKE ON THIS PLACE BEFORE--

--BLAST! WHAT'D I TELL YOU 'BOUT THESE "*DEAD*" VILLAGES? WE BEEN SUCKERED!

YES, THAT *DOES* SEEM TO RATHER LIMIT OUR OPTIONS!

BRRRRRP BRRRP

KPOW

POW POW

BUT IF WE CAN'T GET AWAY, MAYBE WE CAN DO SOME GOOD HERE! COME ON!

RIPP!

SURE, THAT'S EASY FOR *YOU* TO SAY-- YOU'RE THE ONE WITH THE *ARMOR*! WHAT ABOUT--

--AWWW, SHOOT!

KRAKATAKA

VIP VIP VIP VIP VIP

AN AMERICAN SOLDIER!

AND A WALKING MACHINE!

KILL THEM!

RHODEY! THERE'S A CONG CHOPPER! CAN YOU FLY IT?

TO GET OUTTA THIS PLACE, BRO', I'D FLY A FRIGGIN' JEEP!

THEN GET TO IT! I'LL TRY TO KEEP THESE HANOI HOTSHOTS BUSY!

KRUBA-KRUMBLE

AIIEYAGH!

SORRY, FLY-BOY, BUT WE'RE TAKIN' YOUR LUXURY AIRCRAFT HERE FOR A LITTLE SPIN!

KRAKATOW

OKAY, IRON MAN, HOP IN-- QUICK!

BE RIGHT THERE, RHODEY-- JUST AS SOON AS I LEAVE OUR UNGRACIOUS HOSTS A LITTLE SOMETHING TO REMEMBER US BY!

SHHHHHH

NAPALM

DANGER AMMO

OKAY, TAKE 'ER UP! AND HURRY-- IT'LL ONLY TAKE A FEW SECONDS FOR THE FLAMES TO FOLLOW THAT OIL STREAM TO THE AMMO STORES!

NAPALM

DANGER AMMO

I CAN'T HURRY! THE WEIGHT O' THAT METAL TUX O' YOURS IS SLOWIN' US DOWN!

OH, GREAT! I DIDN'T THINK ABOUT THAT!

MO

I'LL HAVE TO POUR ALL THE POWER I CAN INTO MY REVERSE MAGNETISM-- AND JUST HOPE IT'S ENOUGH TO PUSH US AWAY FROM *THEM!*

IT'S WORKIN'! WE'RE GOIN' FASTER! THE ONLY QUESTION NOW IS WHETHER WE CAN GET FAR ENOUGH AWAY BEFCRE THOSE ROCKETS GO--

SHRIP

SHRIP

SHRIP

KABOOM

THE DEBRIS! LOOK OUT!

"LOOK OUT"?! WHADYA THINK I'M DOIN', TIN PANTS-- DRIVIN' THIS THING WITH MY EYES CLOSED?

BUT, WITHIN SECONDS...

IT...IT'S OVER! WE MADE IT!

YEAH. I JUST WISH WE HAD TIME TO GO BACK AN' PICK UP MY STOMACH.

AND THUS, A HALF-HOUR LATER, AT A RADAR INSTALLATION ALONG THE AMERICAN FORCES' NORTHERN DEFENSE PERIMETER...

BOGEY, CAPTAIN! COMIN' IN FROM THE COMMUNIST SECTOR!

THIS IS CAPTAIN HAYS! ALL UNITS TO FULL ALERT! LOOKS LIKE WE GOT US A VC CHOPPER COMIN' TO CALL!

AMERICAN LINES DEAD AHEAD, IRON MAN. WE'RE ALMOST HOME.

HOWEVER...

SHEEOOF

SOME HOMECOMING! THEY THINK WE'RE VIET CONG! THOSE ARE GROUND-TO-AIR ROCKETS!

OH, NO! NOT TWICE IN ONE DAY!

HEY, YOU COMBAT-HAPPY JOES, I'M AMERICAN! LIEUTENANT JAMES R. RHODES, U.S. MARINES!

SORRY, MISTER, YOU'LL HAVE TO DO BETTER THAN THAT. YOU'VE GOT FIVE SECONDS--THEN WE LOOSE ANOTHER VOLLEY!

UH...UH... WILSON PICKET! BIG MACS! UM... ER... MINI-SKIRTS!

NOT GOOD ENOUGH, CHARLIE. AND YOUR FIVE SECONDS ARE UP!

AW, CRUD! THE METS 'LL WIN A *PENNANT* BEFORE I CAN CONVINCE THESE JOKERS!

METS?

PENNANT?

THEY'RE AMERICAN!

THE PASSAGE HAD BEEN EASY THEN, WITH A CODED SECURITY NUMBER ALLOWING THE PURLOINED HELICOPTER TO STOP BRIEFLY ON THE ROOF OF AN EXPERIMENTAL LAB STATION--

--AND TO DEPOSIT A MOST UNUSUAL PASSENGER THERE BEFORE HEADING SOUTHWARD TO SAIGON.

AFTERWHICH, AS THAT PASSENGER HAD RETURNED TO QUARTERS THAT NOW SEEMED SOMEHOW ALIEN...

MY TOP SECRET SECURITY STATUS HELPED ME AVOID EMBARRASSING QUESTIONS THIS TIME, BUT I THINK I'D BETTER STOCK UP ON EXCUSES.

I'LL PROBABLY BE NEEDING THEM IN THE FUTURE.

MEANWHILE, THOUGH, IT SEEMS THIS CHEST PLATE IS ALL I NEED TO KEEP MY HEART BEATING--I WON'T HAVE TO WEAR THE WHOLE SUIT OF ARMOR ALL THE TIME.

THOUGH I HAD BETTER TRIM THE PLATE DOWN A BIT, UNLESS I WANT TO BUY A WHOLE NEW WARDROBE JUST TO COVER IT!

BUT WHATEVER I END UP DOING, I'VE A FEELING THAT, FROM THIS DAY ON...

...MY LIFE IS NEVER GOING TO BE THE SAME

THE NEXT FEW DAYS HAD PASSED IN SECLUSION FOR TONY STARK, AND IN RECUPERATION FOR JIM RHODES. UNTIL AT LAST...

I'M STILL KINDA WOBBLY, NURSE. MAYBE YOU BETTER HOLD ME A LITTLE TIGHTER, HMM?

BASE HOSPITAL SAIGON

NCY

LT. RHODES?

HOW DO YOU DO? I'M TONY STARK.

"STARK"? YOU THE GUY THAT IRON DUDE WAS TALKIN' ABOUT?

THAT'S RIGHT. HE TOLD ME ALL ABOUT HOW YOU HELPED HIM GET TO SAFETY, AND I WANTED TO THANK YOU.

I WOULD HAVE LOST A VERY CLOSE FRIEND IF IRON MAN HADN'T MADE IT.

MR. STARK, I THINK WE *BOTH* DID OUR SHARE O' SAVIN'.

NEVERTHELESS, YOU'RE A GOOD MAN. IF I EVER REQUIRE THE SERVICES OF A PILOT WHILE I'M HERE, I HOPE YOU'LL BE AVAILABLE.

AND IF YOU NEED A JOB WHEN THESE HOSTILITIES ARE OVER, PLEASE DON'T HESITATE TO GIVE ME A CALL.

THANKS FOR THE OFFER, MR. STARK. ONCE I FINISH CLEANIN' UP THESE JUNGLES FOR UNCLE SAM, I'LL SURE KEEP THAT IN MIND.

RHODES

IN TIME, THE WAR FINALLY ENDED, AND TONY STARK HAD GONE ON TO HEAD THE GLOBE-SPANNING INDUSTRIAL CONGLOMERATE KNOWN AS STARK INTERNATIONAL--ALL THE WHILE DEVELOPING AND REFINING THE ARMOR AND THE IDENTITY OF THE SUPER HERO CALLED IRON MAN.

ROXXON

WHILE JIM RHODES HAD PURSUED SEVERAL RATHER COLORFUL CAREERS BEFORE TAKING STARK UP ON HIS OFFER AND BECOMING HIS PRIVATE PILOT, HIS CHIEF AVIATION ENGINEER AND, ULTIMATELY--

--HIS FRIEND...

HEY, TONY, BOSS!

WHA--OH. SORRY. GUESS I WAS DAYDREAMING.

WE'RE ALMOST TO DALLAS. YOU WANT TO TAKE US IN?

RHODES

NO, THANKS. I'M A GOOD PILOT--BUT I PREFER BEING FLOWN BY THE BEST.

AW, SHUCKS, CHIEF, YOU KEEP THAT UP YOU'RE GONNA TURN MY HEAD. AND UNTIL WE GET BACK ON THE GROUND--

--THAT COULD BE DOWNRIGHT DANGEROUS!

CUTE, RHODEY. REAL CUTE...

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